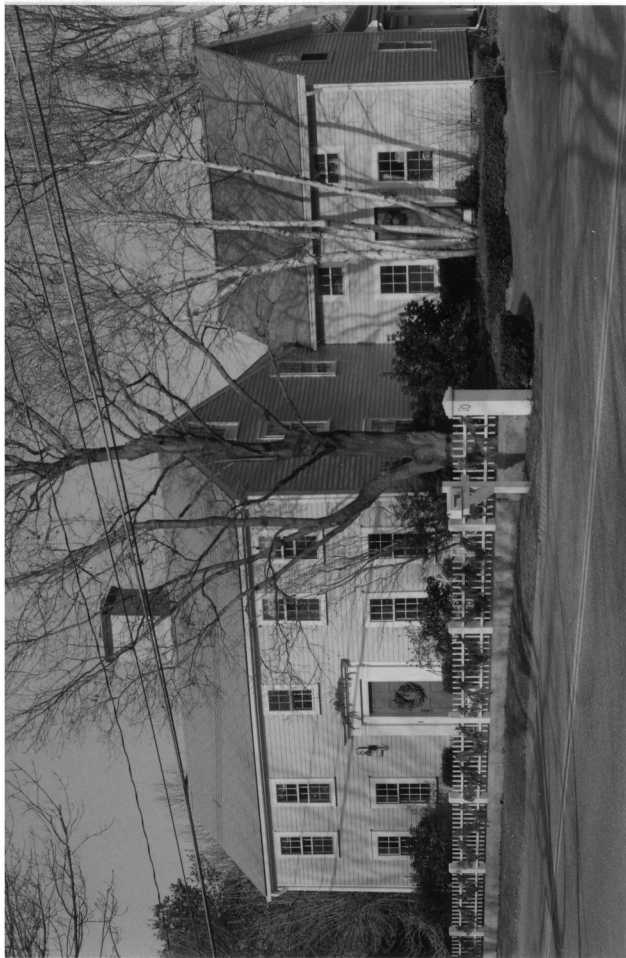


FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125



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Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

0062000008

Boston N.

710

Town Lexington

Place (neighborhood or village)

Address 70 East St.

Historic Name Henry Harrington/Dr. Joseph Fiske House

Uses: Present Residential

Original Residential

Date of Construction 1745

Source Fiske notes

Style/Form Georgian

Architect/Builder

Exterior Material:

Foundation Granite

Wall/Trim Wood Clapboard

Roof Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures

Major Alterations (with dates)

Shed attached to house, rear addition, attached garage (1979)

Condition Good

Moved ☒ no ☐ yes Date

Acreage 0.4 A.

Setting Close to street and across from Italianate with which it was historically associated

Recorded by Nancy S. Seasholes

Organization Lexington Historical Commission

Date (month / year) March 1998

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.

BUILDING FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION ☐ see continuation sheet

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

70 East St. is one of the best-preserved of the 21 Georgian houses still standing in Lexington. The original house is rectangular with an integral leanto, 2½ stories, five-by-one bays, and side-gabled with a large center chimney and an exterior chimney at the west end of the leanto. It is set on a granite foundation, clad with wood clapboards, and roofed with asphalt shingles. A three-by-one bay, side-gabled, 1½-story shed on a fieldstone foundation has been remodeled and attached to the east elevation of the house; behind this is a gabled one-story new addition to which is attached a side-gabled two-car garage. The original house has a center entrance with a surround composed of a projecting molded cornice and fluted pilasters; the 6/9 windows in this house have molded window heads on the first story and are framed into the cornice on the second.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE ☒ see continuation sheet

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

According to notes written by a Fiske descendant, this house was built in 1745 by Henry Harrington (1712–1791). The notes say that Harrington's sons John, Jonathan, and Ebenezer were born in this house, but since John was born in 1739 and Jonathan in 1744, either the house was built prior to 1745 or they were not born in it. The notes go on to say that a Miss or Mrs. Harrington conducted a school in the house that was attended by Joseph Fiske (1752–1837) when he was six or seven. Joseph reportedly planted some cherry seeds in one corner of the garden; the large tree that grew from one was eventually cut down about 1848 by Joseph's grandson Timothy K. Fiske and used as finishing lumber. (The schoolteacher, later known as "Granny" Harrington, eventually moved to the base of the hill that is now known as Granny Hill and has Granny Pond at its summit.)

Henry Harrington sold the house in 1774 to his son John and it was then acquired in 1790 by the Dr. Joseph Fiske who had once attended school here. It was during Dr. Joseph Fiske's ownership that this house became known as the "pest house," for he once treated 32 smallpox patients here (perhaps during the 1792 epidemic), marching them up and down the street for exercise and fresh air. Dr. Joseph apparently had the house repaired between 1789 and 1794, for his grandson Timothy K. Fiske had some of the bills for materials and labor. The interior finishing was reportedly done by Benjamin Phinney (1744–1843)

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES ☐ see continuation sheet

- Fiske, Mary Abbie. Notes on Old Fiske House. "Houses file," Worthen Collection, Cary Library, Lexington, MA.
Hinkle, Alice. "A Spread Fit for a Magazine." *Lexington Minute-man*, 24 February 1983. 13, 15.
Hudson, Charles. *History of the Town of Lexington*. Revised and continued to 1912 by the Lexington Historical Society. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1913. 2: 275–76, 213–15, 217, 218, 528, 584.
Middlesex Registry of Deeds. Deeds. Cambridge, MA. 83:73; 103: 272.
Sileo, Thomas P. "Then & Now." *Lexington Minuteman*, 5 October 1995.
———. "Who Built the Fiske House and Why?" *Lexington Minute-man*, 12 October 1995.

☒ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town
Lexington

Property Address
70 East St.

Area(s) Form No.

	710
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HISTORICAL NARRATIVE (continued)

and the masonry work by Jacob Robinson (1762–1848). Dr. Joseph Fiske married in 1794 and lived in this house until 1809 when, after his father's death the preceding year, he moved to the old Fiske house on Hancock St. (63 Hancock St., MHC #735).

After Dr. Joseph Fiske moved out of the house, it was occupied by a long succession of tenants, who are identified in the Fiske notes, until Dr. Fiske died in 1837. The house was then acquired by his son Joseph (1797–1860), who lived here, again sometimes renting part of it to tenants, from 1838 until his death in 1860. In 1857 Joseph's son Timothy K. Fiske married Barbara Peters, whose family had come to Lexington from Germany in 1855 and would soon live in the house now at 49 East St. (MHC # 709). The couple lived in this house until 1874, when they moved to the house that Timothy had built across the street (71 East St., MHC #711). This house was purchased in 1873 by Eben Stone of Boston, who again rented it out and then sold it in 1880. The house then had a series of owners before being sold at auction in 1892 to William E. Fiske (1858–1944), Timothy K.'s oldest son and a great-grandson of Dr. Joseph Fiske. William continued to live in his parents' house, however, and rented this one to yet another series of tenants. Finally, in 1905 his brother Joseph H. Fiske, a dealer in bicycles and boots and shoes, was married in this house and then lived here until 1919. The house remained in the Fiske family until the 1940s, and in 1979 was renovated by developer Mark Moore and his wife Gladys.